MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Held in Washington, D.C., January 25, 1951

The fourth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, during the fiscal year 1951, was held in its Office in the Interior Department Building, on Thursday, January 25, 1951. The following members were present:

Mr. Finley, Chairman
Mr. Neild,
Prof. Hudnut,
Prof. Belluschi,
Mr. Peets,
Mr. Biddle,
Mr. deWeldon,
also H. P. Caemmerer, Secretary and Administrative Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING: The Minutes of the Meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, held on November 21, 1950, were approved.

2. ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIRMAN: Chairman Finley stated that it has been customary for the Commission of Fine Arts to have a Vice Chairman, and that he would entertain a motion that one be elected. Accordingly, on motion properly moved and seconded, Mr. Neild was elected Vice Chairman of the Commission.

3. FRANCIS SCOTT KEY MEMORIAL, DESIGN FOR FLAGPOLE: Mr. Merel S. Sager, Chief of the Planning Division, National Capital Parks, said his office desired a report from the Commission regarding the design submitted several months ago for the Francis Scott Key Memorial Flagpole.

The Commission felt that the design should be given further study and that action on the design be deferred until the next meeting.

4. AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION:

(a) St. Avold, France, Military Cemetery: Upon the recommendation of Mr. Peets, the Commission agreed to the appointment of Allyn R. Jennings, as the landscape architect for this cemetery (Exhibit A)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Biddle, the appointment of Prof. Herbert Gute, of the Faculty of the Yale School of Fine Arts, as painter collaborator for the St. Laurent (France) Military Cemetery, for the execution of war maps to be done in mosaic in the Memorial Chapel there, was disapproved. Mr. Biddle said he would present a list of painters at the next meeting from which a selection could be made. A report was sent to the American Battle Monuments Commission (Exhibit B) (See also B-1)

(c) Mr. Peets presented a report concerning the design submitted by the American Battle Monuments Commission at the November meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, which, with certain modifications, was adopted. Mr. Peets said the suggestions he was making would bring the structure into better harmony with the general conception. A detailed report was sent to the American Battle Monuments Commission accordingly (Exhibit C)

5. NATIONAL GRANGE MEMORIAL: Chairman Finley presented a design for a Marker that he had received from the National Grange Memorial Committee and stated:

> "The National Grange, if you will remember, asked to have a marker on the Mall at Fourth Street and Madison Drive, I think it is, across from the National Gallery. It was on the corner and the site has been approved. The Grange Committee have taken a great deal of trouble about it. They have come to me two or three times. They want a marker about two inches above the ground in front and the rest of it underneath. It rises to 8 inches in the back. On the granite bolder a bronze plaque is to be mounted. The Grange Committee

were very anxious to have the Commission approve it; they asked whether you have any preference as to giving the bolder a smooth and polished surface on top and a rough finish there (indicating), or would prefer it all rough, or what?"

Mr. deWeldon remarked, "I think a honed finish would be better because it would keep cleaner.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Finley said: "May I suggest we approve the design, then. They also want to know how you want it finished at the corners. The other point is the lettering or legend setting forth the founders of the National Grange. Apparently Caroline Hall had more to do with it than anybody, but she isn't a founder. The Committee first decided to place her name with that of the founders, but now propose to place it down there (indicating)." The Commission agreed to this, as well as the general design.

The action of the Commission in this matter was conveyed to a representative of the Grange Memorial Committee by Mr. Finley.

6. PORTRAIT OF MRS. HOOVER: Chairman Finley said, "There has been no portrait of Mrs. Hoover in the White House. When the National Gallery of Art was assembling the exhibition for the Sesquicentennial Celebration, we had a portrait of her which was loaned to us by the National Girl Scouts Headquarters. It is quite a good portrait, and is the one the Commission approved, as you will remember. I was pleased when we found that the White House could acquire this portrait as a gift from the Girl Scouts. I sent it to the White House for approval by Mrs. Truman. Mrs. Truman said, "We are to be given another portrait of Mrs. Hoover. Mr. Hoover consented to send us one."

"I then wrote to Mr. Hoover and said if he had one that he preferred over the one offered by the Girl Scouts, we would naturally like to have that. He said it was a fine portrait of Mrs. Hoover by deLaszlo and he had a very fine copy made. I told him we would rather have the original, and couldn't he give us that and give the family the copy. He said 'No', that the original has been promised elsewhere, but that he felt sure we would like the copy as well or better. He suggested that since we had not seen it, we write to Mr. Savage for his opinion, since Mr. Savage had seen the copy."

"It is true there are in the White House two or three copies of portraits. While we want original portraits, I think in the case of a historical portrait, so to speak, it is not too important. I am inclined to think that the only thing to do in order to save embarrassment -- I mean because Mrs. Truman had taken a great deal of trouble about this, and also considering Mr. Hoover's feelings -- I would be very glad if the Commission would approve the copy so we can tell Mrs. Truman and Mr. Hoover that it is agreeable to us to accept it."

After further consideration, it was agreed that the Commission would recommend acceptance of this portrait. (Exhibit D)

7. EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF SIR JOHN DILL, ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY: Mr. Finley reported that the Honorable Robert Woods Bliss, Chairman of the Committee for the unveiling of the statue of Sir John Dill in Arlington National Cemetery, had asked if the Commission of Fine Arts considered the statue a good piece of work, and that he would be pleased if the Commission could see it, and also indicate whether or not they like it. Mr. Finley said, "I consider it quite good."

8. GOVERNMENT AND ART, MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT: (A) Mr. Biddle discussed with the Commission a plan that would promote the interests of the Government, artists, and art organizations in America in matters pertaining to the Fine Arts, - a plan that would also have for its purpose the study of "the cultural activities of the Government with an effort to better integrate them in their effective use." Mr. Biddle read a Memorandum that he had addressed to the President, which the Commission discussed briefly and approved (EXHIBIT E). This Memorandum was presented to the President during a meeting with him at the White House at Noon.

9. LAW SCHOOL BUILDING, HOWARD UNIVERSITY: Mr. L. L. Hunter, Acting Supervising Architect, General Services Administration, accompanied by Louis Justement, architect, and his assistant Mr. Ealham, as also Mr. Cook, architect, representing the University, submitted designs and a model for this building. Mr. Justement explained the design.

The Commission were not at all satisfied with the design. It was intended to be a functional building in the contemporary style of architecture but the architect members of the Commission considered it to be so ill-conceived and ugly that they disapproved it. Prof. Hudnut was asked to prepare a Memorandum that would be used as a basis of reply to the Public Buildings Administration. A copy of the discussion, and a copy of Prof. Hudnut's Memorandum (which is to be considered at the next meeting of the Commission) is attached hereto and made a part of these Minutes (Exhibit F).

10. RESTORER OF PAINTINGS OWNED BY THE GOVERNMENT: The Commission took note of a reply on this subject sent by the Honorable David Lynn, Architect of the Capitol, and recommending that the Executive Department of the Government take this matter under its jurisdiction (Exhibit G).

11. GOVERNMENT AND ART (B): Mr. Biddle presented for discussion with the Commission another Memorandum partaining to this subject, entitled "Memorandum on Suggested Policy for the Commission of Fine Arts in the Selection of Recommendation of Mural Painters and Sculptors for Government Projects (Exhibit H). The list of Art Critics and Museum Directors mentioned was noted. Mr. Biddle said that it was intended that Mr. deWeldon join in preparing the Memorandum but there has been no time for this, excepting to send a copy of it to him, and that he has made a few brief comments about it "this morning."

Mr. Biddle suggested that Chairman Finley address a letter to the persons referred to in the Memorandum, asking them "to submit lists of six painters and six sculptors in order of preference," for the consideration of the Commission of Fine Arts. The Commission agreed to this and Mr. Finley said he would attend to it. (Exhibit H-1)

12. GOVERNMENT AND ART (C): Mr. Biddle submitted another Memorandum on this subject, entitled, "Certain Comments on Administrator Larson's Letter to Dr. Finley on the Mural Policy of the Public Buildings Service (Exhibit I).

The Commission discussed the Memorandum and decided to consider it in connection with Administrator Larson's letter (Exhibit I-1) at the next meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts with Honorable W. E. Reynolds, Commissioner of Public Buildings, as well as with Administrator Larson, if he finds it convenient to attend the meeting.

13. CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT: In accordance with arrangements made, and at the request of President Truman, the Members of the Commission and the Secretary called at the White House and were received by the President in the Cabinet Room. The President expressed real pleasure in

meeting the Commission, and, after photographs were taken to satisfy about a dozen newspaper men, the President stated that he had a number of matters in mind to take up with the Commission. First he mentioned the restoration work on the White House, which, he said, is progressing favorably, but which has reached the stage when it should have the particular attention of the Commission.

Then the President mentioned the Dispersal Program for Government Offices, saying that it is proposed to move Government Offices at various places fully twenty miles away from the center of Washington into Maryland and Virginia, where employes would be safe from possible bomb attack, as well as public records. This program still requires the approval of Congress.

Thereupon, Mr. Neild reported on the bad financial condition of the Commission. He told the President that last fall the Budget Bureau had approved an item of $27,000 for the fiscal year 1952, beginning July 1, 1951; later this was cut to $21,000 and in the past month to $18,000. Also, there is needed $3,000 for expenses of the Commission during the remainder of the fiscal year 1951.

The President was very sympathetic in this matter, and said, "I am sorry you were not here a few minutes ago when the Budget Director was here. I shall see to it that the Commission gets the $27,000 and shall so advise the Budget Director at once.

"As for the Deficiency Item, let us make it $5,000, so that if they cut us to $3,000 in Congress we shall be safe."

(The necessary documents are now in the process of being sent to the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives)

Thereupon, Mr. Biddle read and then presented to the President the Memorandum pertaining to the participation of the Government in Art, which the Commission had approved during the morning session. (Exhibit E)

A general discussion of the Memorandum followed, at the conclusion of which the President said, "I am in favor of what you propose. I think we need it as part of the National Defense Program and it will be a good thing for the country. I shall send you a Memorandum confirming this."

Thereupon the President invited the Commission to see the restoration and renovation work under way in the White House. The Commission thanked the President for his cordial reception and the opportunity given to see the interior of the White House. The Commission were guided through the White House by Lorenzo S. Winslow, architect, and Major General Glen E. Edgerton, U.S.A., Executive Director of the Commission on Renovation of the Executive Mansion.

In a few days, the following letter was received from President Truman addressed to Chairman Finley;

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 26, 1951

"Dear Mr. Finley:

I was highly pleased with the session which we had in the Cabinet room yesterday and I am very anxious for the Fine Arts Commission to proceed along the lines suggested in the memorandum which was handed to me.

It was suggested in the memorandum that the Commission could give practical recommendations on how best to integrate and reorganize the present governmental art activities both in the regular set-up and the Defense set-up. I'll appreciate it if you will start in on that project. I am sending a memorandum to Jess Larson, Administrator, General Services, asking him to cooperate with you.

Sincerely yours,
Harry S. Truman"

Memorandum to Mr. Larson: January 26, 1951

I had a long session with the Fine Arts Commission yesterday and they have some ideas which are in line with what I have been trying to do. I'll appreciate it if you will talk to Mr. Finley and give him as much cooperation as you can.

14. SHIPSTEAD-LUCE ACT SUBMISSIONS

The Secretary submitted the following sets of designs that were received from the Inspector of Buildings, under the Shipstead-Luce Act. The action taken was as indicated:

#1398; Residence, 7116 Alaska Ave., NW -- Approved.

#1400; Alteration of Building, 411 2d St., NE -- Approved.

#1401; Design for Residence, 2432 Mass. Ave., NW -- Disapproved.

#1396; Design for alteration of Hardy Shoe Store at 931 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW -- Disapproved.

The contractor reported that he was anxious to proceed with the construction work because he had workmen at the place and also because the company has been paying rent since January 1st. The question of design was taken up further with Mr. Belluschi.

The architect submitted a revised design, and Mr. Belluschi interposed no further objections in view of circumstances above mentioned. Mr. Finley approved the revised design and the Inspector of Buildings was advised accordingly.

15. "OLD GEORGETOWN" ACT

The Secretary submitted the following sets of designs received from the Inspector of Buildings, as submissions under the "Old Georgetown" Act.

#60; Alteration of Store, 1241-43 Wisc. Ave., NW -- Approved with proviso that a Colonial doorway is placed at the entrance.

#61; Alteration of Residence, 3218 O St., NW -- Approved.

16. PARKING LOT, 22d and Q STREETS, N.W.: The Secretary reported that he was requested to attend a Hearing before the Board of Adjustments, Zoning Commission on January 24th at the District Building in connection with an Appeal to establish a Parking Lot at this location, and that he had asked the Board to withhold action until he could bring the matter to the attention of the Commission of Fine Arts "tomorrow," in view of its proximity to the Rock Creek Parkway.

The Board granted this request, and asked for a report from the Commission

During the afternoon Mr. Peets, Mr. Neild and Mr. deWeldon, accompanied by the Secretary, inspected the location. It was noted that while the lot is close to the Parkway, there are several houses intervening. Notwithstanding, a report was received later that the Board had denied the Appeal.

Mr. Peets stated that a Parking Lot in a residential area, as this is, should not be established, if favorably considered, until an appropriate plan for its development had been made. He cited several instances where this had been done in Washington and other cities.

Mr. Peets drafted a Report which was transmitted in the form of a letter to the Board of Zoning Adjustment. (Exhibit J) (See also J-1)

17. FREER GALLERY OF ART: The Director of the Freer Gallery of Art presented several objects of art which he proposed to purchase. The Commission, after inspection, approved them (Exhibit K)

18. NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS: The next meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts is to be held in Washington on Monday and Tuesday, March 19th and 20th. Tuesday, the 20th, is to be devoted to a consideration of the subject Government and Art, which was brought to the

attention of the President and discussed with him.

Also, Mr. Finley, as Director of the National Gallery of Art, invited the Commission to attend the Tenth Anniversary Celebration of the opening of the Gallery, to take place on Saturday evening, March 17th.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington, D.C.

February 1, 1951

Dear General North:

I am pleased to inform you that the Commission of Fine Arts approve your recommendation for the appointment of Allyn R. Jennings, as the landscape architect for the St. Avold American Military Cemetery of World War II.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Brig. Gen. Thomas North, Secretary,
American Battle Monuments Commission,
Room 2080, Main Navy Building,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT A

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington DC

February 1, 1951

Dear General North:

With reference to the appointment of a painter collaborator for the World War II Memorial at St. Laurent, France, I have to inform you that the Commission of Fine Arts disapprove the appointment of Herbert Gute of Yale University for this project.

The Commission propose to consider a list of artists at their next meeting on March 16, 1951, and their decision in this matter will be sent to you at that time.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Brig. Gen. Thomas North, Secretary,
American Battle Monuments Commission,
Room 2080, Main Navy Building
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT B

(See also Exhibit B-1)

C O P Y

HARBESON, HOUGH, LIVINGSTON & LARSON
ARCHITECTS
1510 Architects Building
Philadelphia 3, Pa.

February 16, 1951

Hon. David E. Finley, Chairman
National Commission of Fine Arts
Interior Department Building
Washington 25, D. C.

Re: No. 541 -- A. B. M. C.
COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for sending copies of the findings of the Commission regarding Battle Monuments projects.

With regard to Manila, the comments of the Commission will be studied by Mr. Gardner Dailey and by us with General North in the development of the design. We shall see that a sample of the marble proposed for the Names of the Missing is sent to you.

With reference to the painter collaborator for the St. Laurent Memorial we are disappointed. The work to be done is entirely composition of the battle maps of the Normandy invasion, and the war in Europe. There will be no opportunity for figure work or allegorical composition.

The war story itself is so overpowering as to leave no space for anything of other nature. We had therefore sought a man with experience in presentation of maps, and those spherical projections which seem essential to express global strategy. We felt that in Herbert Gute we had a man of great competence.

We beg you to keep these requirements in mind when you consider the list of artists at your meeting on March 19th.

Sincerely,

Sgd.

John Harbeson

JH/bb
cc: General Thomas North

EXHIBIT B-1

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington DC

January 30, 1951

Dear General North:

The Commission has studied the Manila Cemetery drawings and model at two meetings. We believe that the essential idea of the design -- the thousands of names inscribed on marble walls set radially in structure forming a great circular court -- is a masterly composition. It will give visitors a deeply moving impression of the heroic sacrifices made by the Philippine Republic and the United States in the defense of their freedom.

The members felt, however, that certain modifications of the design would bring the structure into better harmony with the general conception. In view of the basic soundness of the "parti", and because the architects, as well as the consultant to the American Battle Monuments Commission, are highly regarded by this Commission, our suggestions will be optional. The design as submitted is approved with the request that the sponsors give consideration to the following comments:

1. As a planning motive, the circle is graceful and self-unifying; these qualities, however, are easily lost when a circle is combined with other plan features. In this case the dynamic linear movement of the tower axis cuts through the static space created by the circular elements. This can be done successfully only by a strong correlation of the two factors. Means of doing this will be mentioned in later paragraphs.

2. Shifting our point of view, let us consider what happens when sections of a circular enclosure are removed. Narrow breaks have little effect; wide gaps, on the other hand, are very destructive of the circle's charming continuity. Arcs less than a semi-circle seem to spring out at the ends and hence to look "flatter" than they really are. This optical effect is noticeable in the plan and model of the ~~proje~~ Manila project; we think it would be noted in the executed work, in spite of the lowness of the buildings and the presence of trees; certainly it would be experienced in the view from the tower.

3. When buildings in arc form are used as they are in this design, the end walls (being laid on radial lines from the center of curvature) are difficult to assimilate into a unified combination of rectilinear and circular elements. Strongly angular and flaring in opposite directions, these pairs of end walls are of no value in correlating the circular motif with the rectilinear one. The two arc-ends near the tower are visible from the tower platform, but insofar as this relation is emphasized there is a corresponding loss in the strength of the main axis.

4. The tower and the long vista it terminates have an important function in the drama of the group. They express life and hope; they give evidence that the people whose names are inscribed on the marble slabs -- and on the crosses of the cemetery -- are not forgotten by the community. They call the people to do honor to the fallen soldiers and sailors. But the design should attain this expression without loss of harmony with the circular elements.

5. The architects have no doubt studied many modifications of the circular plan. If the use of separate centers (of which the Piazza di S. Pietro is the best known example) has been considered and discarded, we urge that it be reconsidered. We suggest two complete half-circles, of reduced radius, separated by a distance somewhat less than the width of the present openings, with the ends of the hemicycles standing parallel to the tower axis. On this simplified pattern we believe that an orderly composition could be built up, one that would have the fine simplicity of the architects' basic monumental concept.

6. It should also be noted that modifications of a different type could be employed to strengthen the circular motive as compared with the tower axis. For example, the tower could be brought forward into contact with (or made to coalesce with) the circular construction. And the other gap in the circle might be reduced or, by a modified entrance feature, substantially eliminated. These measures might make it possible to give the court a truly circular plan.

7. Further, we urge the architects to consider whether any simplification of the design can be effected. Though not informed as to local conditions, we assume that recent developments have increased the need for economy. Changes that might be considered are: A reduction in the height of the tower; the elimination of the four rooms at the ends of the arc-buildings, or the substitution of one or two such rooms, at the tower; a reduction in the number or size of terraces, steps, and retaining walls. In case reinforcing steel is not available we offer the suggestion (exclusively in respect to aesthetic factors) that it would be possible, without loss of monumental effect, to omit the roof over the radiating slabs which carry the inscriptions.

8. Miscellaneous notes: In studying Bernini's plaza it must be remembered that he intended to close most of the present wide opening with a block of colonnade, leaving two openings corresponding approximately to the two Borghi.... The flag poles in the Manila plan seem too far apart.... The arc-buildings are very low in relation to the size of the court, but the presence of trees will create a garden atmosphere to which the low buildings will be appropriate.... If local conditions make it economically practicable we feel that the use of sculpture would add to the memorial expression of the group.... We like the absence of cross-walks in the circular court.... If convenient, the members of the Commission would like to see a small sample of the marble in which the inscriptions are to be cut.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Brig. Gen. Thomas North, Secretary
American Battle Monuments Commission
Room 2080, Main Navy Building
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT C

COPY

THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Washington DC

February 7, 1951

Dear Mr. Lathrop:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at a recent meeting, reviewed their recommendation for the acceptance of the gift of the portrait of Mrs. Hoover by Miss Lydia Emmet for the White House, in view of the fact that another portrait has been offered by former President Hoover. The Commission felt that, under the circumstances, they would like to comply with the wishes of Mr. Hoover and, therefore, recommended that the portrait which he has offered should be accepted for this purpose.

I am disappointed that the Emmet portrait cannot go to the White House, as we had hoped it might do. Under the circumstances, however, there is nothing to do but return the portrait to you, and I shall arrange to have this done after receiving advice from you.

I hope you will thank the officers and Board of Directors of the Girl Scouts for their generosity in offering to make their portrait of Mrs. Hoover available for the White House and for the understanding attitude which they have taken in this matter. I wish to thank you again for your kindness in lending this portrait for the exhibition "Makers of History in Washington" at the National Gallery during the sesquicentennial celebration.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.

David E. Finley
Director

Mr. Leonard Lathrop
Girl Scouts of the United States of America
155 East 44th Street
New York 17, New York

def/lw/b

EXHIBIT D

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington DC

January 25, 1951

Mr. President:

In the national emergency which our country faces -- and will continue to face for the foreseeable future -- you have indicated to me that you will feel the desirability of mobilizing the cultural activities of the Government, as of the entire country, in the overall picture of our national defense.

At present these governmental art activities are scattered, actually among ten different departments or agencies. The power which they could exercise both here and abroad is reduced and frittered. The State Department is aware of this situation and would welcome a greater use of art in our national education and to sell democracy to the world. The Defense Department, too, is without any effective program for the use of artists in making a historical record of our fighting troops; and in the use of camouflage.

There are existing agencies, however, which might be expanded to fulfill these and other cultural needs; immediately and without the necessity for congressional action. One is the National Gallery of Art and other cultural governmental institutions. Another is the American Federation of Arts, with over 500 affiliated chapters throughout the country. A third is the Commission of Fine Arts, which you know all about.

In England during the late war the Arts Council and the British Council were set up as emergency agencies. They proved so effective that they have been retained. Government subsidies are administered by civilian professional authorities. The Arts Council is an agency for the internal dissemination of art throughout the country. (Briefly what might be done by the Federation of Arts and also by an effective mural program under the Public Buildings Service.) The British Council disseminates art in the nation's foreign relations. (Briefly what the State Department needs to implement its foreign policies.) These two agencies offer today perhaps the most liberal, enlightened and effective art policy in the world.

The Commission of Fine Arts, Mr. President, is competent to investigate and make a report to you on the more effective integration of governmental cultural activities. It would have at its disposal the experience of the English set-up, of the Office of the Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs of World War II; of the War Department Art Committee of World War II; and of the former art program under the Public Buildings Administration. In a minimum time the Commission could give you practical recommendations on how best to integrate and reorganize the present governmental art activities, in the overall picture of national defense.

George Biddle

EXHIBIT E

Mr. President:

LAW SCHOOL BUILDING, HOWARD UNIVERSITY

COPY OF DISCUSSION WITH THE COMMISSION OF
FINE ARTS AT MEETING HELD JANUARY 25, 1951

Mr. L. L. Hunter (Assistant Supervising Architect, Public Buildings Service, General Service Administration). The Public Buildings Administration, Public Buildings Service,is presenting this morning this item for Howard University. Mr. Cook representing the University is here. Mr. Louis Justement and Mr. Ealham are here from the Architect's Office. The architects are here. I will ask Mr. Justement to present it.

Mr. Louis Justement. I think we might start by looking at the front, which is the way the model is turned, now. This is Georgia Avenue, this is Howard Place, and that is Sixth Street. The Engineering Building, which is under construction at the present time, is represented. This site as you will see both from the plan and from the model has a very peculiar topography, in that it is all sloping down from that corner to this corner, sloping down sharply on Howard Place and Sixth Street and a little bit less so on Georgia Avenue.

The needs of the problem were such that we did not need to get a lot of day-light inside. This is a court occupying the top floor, surrounded by libraries.

On the top floor we have a library. It is made for economy of construction to get almost a square building which would be about two stories high at its extreme upward corner, facing the intersection of Sixth Street and Howard Place, and four stories high at the lower side. The rest of the problem was to get the desired amount of parking between the two schools at that point, and leave a space for landscape treatment here between the new building and Georgia Avenue.

Those are the essentials of the problem.

Now we have in addition a perspective. This is a detailed perspective of the entrance of the building. That is a perspective showing mainly the Sixth Street side which we are looking at there (indicating). The rest of it is fairly well illustrated by the model, itself.

I might add that this entrance is only a very secondary entrance off of Georgia Avenue. This is primarily an exit. The main entrance to the school is here (indicating) and then that other entrance on Sixth Street is an entrance to be used at night when the school is not generally open, for a selected few students who constitute the law review group.

Mr. Hudnut. Why do you change the material, here? Is that granite?

Mr. Justement. This is limestone and this is brick.

Mr. Hudnut. Doesn't that tend to separate the design into two parts?

Mr. Justement. We felt that it was primarily intended to accentuate the entrance and we wanted to get this kind of a feature, there, and this would certainly not look well in brick.

Mr. Hudnut. May I differ with you, there? I think it would look better in brick. You have already a sharp difference in scale. That might be explained in the difference in construction but the difference in material puzzles me very much.

Mr. Belluschi. It seems you have four or five different motifs there and they are all fighting each other.

Mr. Justement. Actually, there are different things going on in back, there. In other words, these are classrooms, this is a library and these are administrative offices.

Mr. Belluschi. You have a horizontal motif, then a vertical, and you have a different material, there.

Mr. Peets. Is there a difference between the model and the drawing with regard to these windows?

Mr. Justement. These windows are away at the end. However, we do show the windows in this model.

Mr. Hudnut. It all appears to be quite functional and hangs together pretty well. Then suddenly you come to this entrance and you revert to type. You go back to your classic theme.

Mr. Justement. I might say there is a reason for that, also. The engineering building is strictly plain and functional, but the group around the campus itself is a colonial group. The authorities at the university are rather partial to that treatment around the campus and this is an attempt to, in a sense, make a transition between what is the more modern part of the university and the campus, itself.

Mr. Cook. I might say that this is not exactly what Mr. Justement would like to have done if he had a free hand.

Mr. Hudnut. Do you feel that the Commission might come to the rescue of the architect?

Mr. Cook. That may be so. I wanted to relieve him if I could.

Mr. Neild. I think the whole thing could be unified, more. Why couldn't you use the stone piers, if that was a good compromise, and use more brick in this whole treatment?

Mr. Hudnut. It would seem the brick would make it more Georgian than your limestone.

Mr. Justement. I realize it is not a happy thing to start out with the idea of making a compromise between the two. On the other hand, I think it is a problem that has to be more or less met in this case. We have leaned more toward the functional side quite obviously than we have toward the traditional side.

Mr. Cook. One of your studies did have the brick, if you will remember.

Mr. Justement. One of them did. We made a number of them. Most of them, however, were on the basis of stone.

In one case, this was brick and we nad an open colonnade running around this (indicating). The university authorities didn't like that one as well as they did this one. For development, they felt it was not formal enough.

Mr. Hudnut. I would like to suggest we request the university authorities to reconsider, and that we support the architect and make the suggestion to use the brick.

Mr. Hunter. I don't know whether it actually got to the discussion of materials when they decided the original scheme was not monumental enough for them. You came up with the stone in an effort to accomplish that.

Mr. Hudnut. We could suggest that the University authorities reconsider the situation in that manner.

Mr. Hudnut. You could bring it up on the occasion of the March meeting.

Mr. Justement, We had wanted to go ahead as soon as the tentative drawings had been approved by the University. These are the tentative drawings which are now complete.

Mr. Biddle. Would the materials affect the drawing?

Mr. Justement. Yes. We would not change the material and keep the same design, quite obviously. I would not want to go ahead with work on the buildings unless we had the materials.

Mr. Finley. We will be meeting after lunch. Would you like to hold this in abeyance and take it up then?

Mr. Belluschi. I don't think it would be necessary as far as I am concerned.

Mr. Hunter. Are your previous studies in brick such that you could present them this afternoon?

Mr. Justement. I believe so. We might even get them here in fifteen minutes. That might be worse for the Commission than waiting until this afternoon. I could call and have them sent down.

Mr. Finley. I believe it might be well if you would get them now. We could go on with the next item on the agenda.

Mr. Caemmerer. We have something on the Battle Monuments. Mr. Peets is ready to discuss that. There has been a memorandum sent out to the members. There are two things. One is the report on Manila.

Mr. Belluschi. I wonder if the Chairman would mind if we discuss this other matter briefly while they are not here. I think it is rather important for our own conscience in the future. Since it is more or less negative work that we do on this Commission, I think it is about time we stated strongly that we think this is what would be good for our city, as well as what we stand for.

I think there are indications here that their efforts are in the wrong direction. I would rather see a good Georgian or good Colonial and call it quits. There are so many elements of modern architecture that have just been arbitrarily applied, and it makes a thoroughly bad building. For one, I would like to send it back, asking that they re-study it, not worrying whether it would be modern or what it is -- perhaps that would be dangerous to say in that manner, but I would like to disapprove it and send it back for restudy.

Mr. Hudnut. I think there are too many bad things about it. For example, the use of a monumental feature at the minimum height and going down to a greater height here (indicating)

It is preposterous beyond words.

Mr. Belluschi. I am a great exponent of contemporary architecture, but I like to insist on it being right.

Mr. Finley. I agree.

I believe Mr. Neild wanted to say something about it.

Mr. Neild. I think we should give Mr. Justement our reasons. I agree that it is a poor modern. If we tell Mr. Justement frankly we don't approve the design, shall we go any further?

Mr. Belluschi. I think we place ourselves in the dangerous position of telling them what to do. I think it would be wise to give them some reason, that there is a confusion of too many elements. Any criticism beyond that I think would be dangerous and create a precedent.

Mr. Neild. Do you have any idea what the other buildings are?

Mr. Finley. The old ones are in the traditional style, more or less Georgian.

Mr. Biddle. It would have probably been a much better building if it were colonial.

Mr. Belluschi. The worst feature is that changing of material, there.

Mr. Finley. Shall we ask Mr. Justement to go back and try to design something better? I don't think we should approve this just because they would like to get the building underway and we are not meeting until March. If it is not satisfactory, I think we should ask for something better.

Mr. Belluschi. It will be there for a long, long time.

Mr. Peets. I am wondering if this is not at the corner of the site where a new approach would be justified.

Mr. Belluschi. I would not mind having a new approach if it was sound and without tricks. I do not like tricks in architecture, because they will be coming back to bite us in ten years' time.

Mr. Finley. Perhaps we should wait and see what he is bringing back to us and then we can ask him for the location of this entrance. If we don't like the brick treatment, I think we should ask him to bring us a new design.

Mr. Caemmerer. There are three or four Shipstead items.

Mr. Belluschi reports on a design for a building at 931 Pennsylvania Avenue. You say it is no good. I think the Commission will concur.

Mr. Belluschi. It is very poorly done. I have simply stated that the basic conception is far from satisfactory and recommend sending it back for re-study.

Mr. Caemmerer. They possibly need a good architect.

Mr. Belluschi. I think that would be a good recommendation. I don't think we could suggest that, however.

Mr. Caemmerer. There is no objection to telling that to the builder, is there?

Mr. Neild. Can't we tell this man that we think he has too many different elements in his design and that we prefer simplification? Don't you think we should recommend simplification?

Mr. Hudnut. I wouldn't say simplification because he might eliminate some features and try to get it in again.

Mr. Neild. What would you suggest?

Mr. Hudnut. I would like to say that it is not truly a modern building and that it might as well be a stylistic building.

Mr. Neild. I think we should tell him why we object to it in some

general terms without giving an idea of our designing it.

Mr. Peets. It seems it would be a nice thing if we had a manifesto regarding the various approaches that could be handed out in cases like this which would not have the personal impact of being directed against a particular design.

Mr. Belluschi. I believe many of us have read Mr. Hudnut's manifestoes.

Mr. Neild. Would you express it, Mr. Hudnut?

Mr. Hudnut. Would you want me to make an effort now?

Mr. Neild. I do not want to burden you. Perhaps you could tell when he comes in.

Mr. Hudnut. Let us say this: We feel this building is not a modern building in the sense that the exterior expression does not proceed from the organism of the building but is rather an applique of stylistical elements -- developed, to be sure, in modern times, but no more related to the internal development of the building than if they were colonial or Georgian elements. That nothing is gained by substituting modernistic windows in proportions for Georgian, unless that relationship is established.

Is that too academic?

Mr. Neild. I think it is very clear.

Mr. Peets. Perhaps he is trying to carry water on both shoulders.

Mr. Belluschi. That is exactly it.

(At this point, Mr. Justement and Mr. Hunter returned to the Commission Room)

Mr. Justement. This is the engineering building which is under construction. This is the campus proper and this is the library. That is a Georgian building and so is that one and the idea is to carry that treatment around there.

Mr. Hunter. Those are the only two existing on that quadrangle, there.

Mr. Justement. There is a building here, but it isn't like this at the present time, and there are buildings there but they are to come down.

(A drawing of the university grounds was discussed.)

Mr. Justement. These are two alternative sketches which we had worked out for the entrance, which is that corner right there (indicating).

Mr. Hudnut. I think it is very important if we are going to have modern buildings that they should be extremely good examples of modern thought and not compromises. I would much prefer to go on with Georgian than to erect buildings here in this Capital that are not true examples of modern design.

Now the fundamental ideal of modern architecture is an organic relation between the structure of the building and the facade. It is not just a designing of a building and having an applique of modernistic forms as opposed to colonial forms, but the forms of the exteriors should be a necessary development from the structure organization.

Mr. Justement. I think we all agree on that.

Mr. Hudnut. You can make it Georgian easily by changing the details.

Mr. Justement. I would beg to differ. We would have a very difficult time making that fit a Georgian design. The fenestration would not work in a classroom where we have to have something entirely different.

Mr. Hudnut. Your point is that you have more glass?

Mr. Justement. It makes a great difference in the shape of the windows.

Mr. Hudnut. I should be very much happier if you make an effort to build a pure exemplar of the fundamentals of the modern or the stylistic. I think in the compromises you have a great many elements distributed around the facade, but they do not make any common order or common sense. I have never seen a little building with so many different kinds of windows.

Mr. Justement. To me, that is precisely what it calls for. There are different things going on in back of those windows and there is no reason at all why the fenestration should be the same in all cases.

Mr. Hudnut. I wouldn't say in all cases, but surely not so vast a variety.

Mr. Justement. Essentially there are only three types of windows.

Mr. Hudnut. The only way you can tell the difference in size and use of the rooms is by size in the windows.

Mr. Justement. Well, that is one of the ways. I grant you it might be possible to get a different shaped building and get it more interesting from the form of the building, but that would still not be my idea of good modern architecture, because it would increase the cost of the building without increasing its functional use. In fact the use of the building would not be as good if it were an L-shaped plan that extended over a larger area of ground, as it is with its present plan. The present plan functions very, very well, and results in that shaped building. Since the plan does function well, that is the shape building we ought to work with from the matter of design.

Mr. Belluschi. It isn't very clear whether this thing is needed in some of those studies, there.

Mr. Justement. This thing could conceivably be dispensed with, but that is the only part of the building that wouldn't absolutely have

to be, and even there there is a reason for it in the plan. In other words, it is not simply stuck on in order to develop that shape. In plan, it is very desirable to meet the program requirements.

Mr. Belluschi. It is not unified. There are so many things going on. There is a great improvement even in being able to see the body of the building without this interference. In other words, this is not needed (indicating). If this is not needed, it should not be there, because it is not economical to have this come out with all the flashing and other things needed.

These items here have nothing to do with modern (indicating). You have these little tiny windows here and then the large, longitudinal windows and then the vertical windows.

They have nothing to do with the classrooms.

On the other side, you have also again a different kind of windows and different motifs. You have this, and there you have one and then you have other windows here and it is not apparent that they are needed for any purpose.

Mr. Justement. These are in the stack room and they are quite high and are just what are needed for this particular purpose.

Mr. Belluschi. That is right, but then you go and put bands, here, thereby creating a very confused elevation of this, and that, and then this (indicating). It doesn't seem necessary. It seems to be a conglomeration of little cliches which detract from the unity of the building. I think it is purely a question of designing. The shape is economical and so forth, but the fact that you change the material and put that disturbing element, no matter how you treat it, right in the corner, simply as a matter of design, it is hard to see.

Mr. Peets. From an architectural point of view, I am attracted by that building that has a porch effect.

That forms a contact between the open spaces that come up here, it makes a contact between the plaza and the building and also undoubtedly those people when they come out or are gathering for class, they like to get together and smoke their last cigarette and so forth.

Mr. Hudnut. The functional elements are the court, the classrooms and the library.

Mr. Justement. That is correct.

Mr. Hudnut. Don't you think that the forms of the building should be in three divisions; courts, library and classrooms; clearly marked?

Mr. Justement. I don't believe that follows. I do not believe that court is as distinct as you indicate, Mr. Hudnut. The court is actually a classroom.

Mr. Hudnut. It has a different character from the others.

Mr. Justement. It can only be expressed on the outside with this plan, as a projection through the roof.

Mr. Hudnut. It just strikes me that you have an opportunity of which you should take advantage, by showing the distinct composition of those three elements and giving each of them an individual character, and then giving them elements in common so that they are organized together. You have enough ground to do that.

Mr. Hunter. It is not a question of ground, sir, it is a question of economy, as well.

Mr. Hudnut. You could save enough on that stone portico to make up the difference.

Mr. Hunter. Our estimater would not agree with you, sir.

Mr. Hudnut. Anyway, this Commission cannot approve it on the basis of whether it costs more or less. We have to say whether it is good or bad and we cannot argue about cost.

When you have a chance there to show Washington what is modern, or what the principle is, I should think you would follow that.

Mr. Justement. I will say our original and first conception was this sketch, here. I still think that that is the best one from my point of view, but I am not going to make any further comment about it.

Mr. Belluschi. Of those three, I agree with you.

Mr. Hunter. We had so rated them, 1, 2 and 3.

Mr. Justement. That is the way we had rated them, yes.

Mr. Belluschi. Would it be any worse there in suggesting that you be less modern and be more straight-forward in the solution, really with the idea of saving money?

Mr. Justement. I think that would even be more difficult.

Mr. Finley. Do you have a photograph of the buildings on each side?

Mr. Hunter. No, sir, we submitted an engineering building some time ago, but I could get you a photograph or perspective of that. Some of these other buildings are not authorized yet.

This one was submitted six months to a year ago. It is under construction, now (indicating).

Mr. Finley. How necessary is it to get the building underway? Have you contracted for materials?

Mr. Hunter. No, sir. We have money for construction of this building. We wanted to get the building started as soon as we could.

Mr. Hudnut. Perhaps we could send a copy of our discussion to the University authorities, requesting them to submit a design in which our comments have been taken into consideration.

Mr. Justement. I don't know whether we could possibly do that unless there was a little bit better definition of the comments, because, just based on the conversation and discussion that has been had so far, I don't think that there is full agreement on what we should do in order to comply with it, sir.

Mr. Hunter. Would you suggest a re-study of the entrance?

Mr. Hudnut. A re-study and characterization of the different volumes and a re-study of the fenestration.

Mr. Hunter. I was hoping we could get agreement at least on the conception in mass so it would be a re-study of the fenestration and, perhaps, entrance. All of our present-day architecture, Dr. Hudnut, as you know, is geared to economy and we feel that a form in this shape is about the only thing we can build in the present appropriation.

Mr. Hudnut. Every time we make a suggestion, we are met with the element of economy.

Mr. Hunter, We are faced with a Congressional limit where you have to build in so much space.

Mr. Justement. I must say I am unable to follow the theory, which I understand is advanced, that all of the windows have a horizontal expression, that it is wrong to have some windows vertical and some horizontal.

Mr. Hudnut. I did not hear anyone suggest that.

Mr. Belluschi. I think it would be just as easy to have it re-studied and submitted so there would be that effort to submit a conception which doesn't exist, here.

Mr. Neild. There is no question about the shape of the building, is there? I mean there is no criticism concerning the rectangular or

square shape?

Mr. Hudnut. I think it could be restudied and some consideration given to form.

Mr. Justement. If we had time to go into the plan, I think I could convince you that the form does function very, very well as it is and to attempt to change the plan, simply to get the different elevation, which is what you would be doing would not be architecturally good. With respect to those windows down there, it is pretty hard to see it at that small scale, but I believe that is going to be one of the nicest parts of the whole composition, to get some deep reveals in there for those library windows.

Mr. Finley. I think the Commission is not ready to approve this design. I think all we can say is that if you care to take it back and restudy it, we will be glad to consider it at the next meeting.

Is there anything else we can do now?

Mr. Hunter. Can we limit that to the fenestration and study of detail?

Mr. Finley. How do the members of the Commission feel about it?

Mr. Neild. Suppose we prepare a memorandum in executive session.

Mr. Finley. We will do that, Mr. Justement, and send it to you later. I would like you to get the building underway as soon as possible, but I don't think the Commission can approve something it really has objection to.

Mr. Peets. Mr. Chairman, inasmuch as there is one feature that has been pretty generally admired in this study here; namely, the porch arrangement and the entrance; I would just like to pose a question to our architecture confreres; instead of coming around the corner, the porch

might better be simplified to be on this end of the building only, and, perhaps, deeper, since that is the movement of the entrance.

Mr. Belluschi. That is a savings right there.

Mr. Hunter. A savings in cost.

Mr. Belluschi. And you don't need all those columns to support that little slab.

Mr. Hudnut. You could make a substantial saving by inundating that feature, entirely. I do not see how the building gains by it.

Mr. Peets. I like the idea of a gathering place for people under shelter.

Mr. Finley. I think all we can do is to send you a memorandum.

Mr. Hunter. Will you address that memorandum, please, sir, to the Public Buildings Service?

Mr. Finley. Yes.

How should this memorandum be prepared? Would you have time to dictate it?

Mr. Hudnut. I could do it this afternoon.

Mr. Finley. Good.

EXHIBIT F

C O P Y

December 11, 1950

Honorable David E. Finley, Chairman
The Commission of Fine Arts
Interior Department Building
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Finley:

With reference to the suggestion made by your Commission that a full-time artist be employed on the payrolls of the Architect of the Capitol to restore paintings of the Government in Washington, including those in the United States Capitol Building, I do not believe that Congress would be favorably disposed at this time towards a proposal of this nature which would result in an increase in the cost of running the Legislative Branch of the Government.

It may be of interest to state that for many years (1862 to 1937), an employee, designated as "Superintendent of Meters", was carried on the rolls of the Architect of the Capitol by express provision of law, to inspect and certify the readings of gas and (later) electric meters not only in the Capitol and other buildings under the Architect of the Capitol but also in the buildings in the Executive and Judicial groups in the District of Columbia. This practice was, however, discontinued in 1937, at which time the law was changed and the employee and his duties transferred to the Department of Interior, which then had charge of most of the public buildings in Washington, as it was the view of Congress that such expenses should be borne by the Executive, rather than the Legislative Branch of the government, since, obviously, the Executive Branch receives the greater share of service.

Since the work to be done by the artist proposed in your letter would, likewise, undoubtedly be more extensive in the Executive Branch buildings than in the Capitol Building, it is my personal view that Congress would assume a similar attitude towards any request for funds under the appropriation for the Capitol Building for the purpose proposed by your Commission.

Yours very truly,

Sgd.

David Lynn
Architect of the Capitol

EXHIBIT G

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE
COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS, JANUARY 25, 1951

Mr. Biddle. (Reading) "Memorandum on Suggested Policy for the Commission of Fine Arts in the Selection or Recommendation of Mural Painters and Sculptors for Government projects.

(1) The over-all policy of the Commission in selecting or recommending artists for government projects shall be, first of all, to secure the most distinguished and eminent artists of the nation in an effort to create notable and monumental work.

(2) The Commission should make every effort, however, in its choice of artists (A) to cover as wide a geographical range as possible and (B) always to be on the lookout for young painters and sculptors of recognized talent, who may not, however, have achieved national recognition.

(3) With this over-all policy in view, it is suggested that, in making its selections or recommendations, the Commission invite a small number of distinguished authorities to submit lists, in order of preference, of such artists as they feel to be the most eminent, competent and best equipped for executing government commissions in mural painting and architectural sculpture.

It is recognized, of course, that the Commission cannot delegate its duty to making recommendations; and it will not necessarily be guided by such lists. It is felt, however, that its members should have the opportunity of consulting qualified professional opinion throughout the nation.

It is believed that this procedure will serve the double purpose of keeping in touch with different geographical sections of the country; and also with younger artists, as they become known through local museums, exhibitions, etc.

It is suggested that the following be asked to submit lists of six painters and six sculptors in order of preference:"
From now on, it would be subject to provisions, whether they select more than six sculptors, or whether I have made the right selection of authorities.

In suggesting these names, I tried to get men of authority so that in making the list, they would give us a certain backing, and men of general intelligence for the purpose in mind, and also men who would to some degree have the backing of the artists and sculptors of the Country because it seems to me terribly important that our Commission in the technique that it uses, does something that has the backing of the artists and sculptors throughout the Country.

" 1. Robert Beverly Hale, Curator of Painting, Metropolitan Museum.

2. Lloyd Goodrich, Art Critic, Chairman of Committee of Government and Art, Assistant Director of Whitney Museum.

3. Daniel Catton Rich, Director, Chicago Art Institute.

4. Grace McCann Morly, Director, San Francisco Museum.

5. William Zorach, Sculptor.

6. Henry Varnum Poor, Painter, former member of Fine Arts Commission.

7. Peppino Mangravite, Painter, Director of School of Painting and Design, Columbia University.

8. Millard Sheets, Painter, Director of Art School, Pomona College, California.

9. Olin Dows, Painter, former assistant director of Treasury, Section of Painting and Sculpture.

(4) In order to promote a greater confidence and interest in the policy of the Commission among artists throughout the Country, it is suggested that from time to time the Chairman of the Commission should give releases of its policy, as well as selections of artists, to the press."

Now I sent this to deWeldon. He did not have a chance to answer. He made the comment to me this morning that he felt there might be some difficulty having painters and sculptors on this recommending list, because it would prohibit them from getting jobs.

Ned Bruce did not feel that that was to the point in the commissions he awarded in his section of painting and sculpture. If he asked a painter to make suggestions, it would be admitted that he was open to jobs or else painters would be asked in cases where they were not open to that particular job.

It seems to me to be advisable if possible to have artists also on the list making recommendations, if we accept this procedure

That is all.

Mr. Finley. As I understand it, in making recommendations, the artists are not precluded from the consideration of the Commission regarding contracts, because we can add to this list ourselves. We do not promise to use the suggestions of the individuals mentioned, but we would like to have their suggestions and then I should think the Commissiou should go over the list of names submitted and look at the work of these men and have, as I understand, a private list to guide us in making suggestions of qualified artists for government projects. I think, if the list were ever make public, it would create a great deal of trouble for us.

Mr. Hudnut. I notice you have no architect on the list. Don't you think someone who has used painters and sculptors should be on it?

Mr. Biddle. Surely. I omitted one paragraph:

"In order to (inaudible)_____ _____artists throughout the Country, it is suggested that from time to time the Chairman of the Commission should give releases of its policy as well as selections of the artists to the Press." I am positive in my own mind that the more public releases there are of what we are doing, the more we will have the cooperation and backing of the artists throughout the Country."

Mr. Hudnut. What would you think of an absolutely modern architect?

Mr. Belluschi. What do you think about Millard Sheets?

Mr. Biddle. I have him down.

Mr. Belluschi. Yes.

Mr. Biddle. I suggested him because I think he carries more authority than anybody I can think of on the West Coast.

Mr. Finley. Duncan Philips is a very good man to suggest qualified artists.

Mr. Hudnut. These are mural painters and sculptors and architects. Duncan Philips would be very good but this is a little different.

Mr. Biddle. I wrote on my own to one or two museum directors and friends and found out you get pretty crazy lists. We must bear in mind, if you write a letter asking for suggestions, you must say these are for Government jobs, and also that we don't have to follow their advice. However, I think we would be in a much greater position of authority if we could choose from such lists.

For instance, no one has ever suggested Epstein as a possible sculptor who has worked for the Government.

Mr. Finley. I think in the letter it should be carefully stated that we are asking for suggestions of names that we could have before us and which could be added to from time to time; that it is not a final list. Everyone who is not on it will be very vocal in their criticism. I think it must be pointed out that this is not an exclusive list, that this is not the only list that we are going to choose from, but that these are merely names that we want to have for our guidance.

Mr. Biddle. That letter should come from you as Chairman.

Mr. Finley. I think we should say we are asking for suggestions as to qualified persons.

Mr. Biddle. I think we should keep in mind that we want to find the best artists in America to do monumental work.

Mr. Belluschi. I think there should be even more than one architect.

Mr. Biddle. It suits me.

Mr. Belluschi. There is really an architectural problem.

Mr. Biddle. I will agree that it is.- I won't quite agree that it is an architectural problem basically.

Mr. deWeldon. I think all art work and architecture should be conceived at the same time the architectural plan is conceived and be part of it and not an addition to the work.

Mr. Belluschi. I think basically it is an architectural problem, but it requires a superb artist to carry it through.

Mr. Hudnut. I might agree with you, but I would say most architects are not competent to choose artists. They should have training in schools to make them competent in those fields, but they are not.

Mr. Biddle. You mean that mural painting is architectural painting.

Mr. Belluschi. A good painting could be put in the wrong place.

Mr. Biddle. A good painter would not do it.

Mr. Belluschi. A good painter would not do it, but an architect might not object to it.

Mr. Biddle. There was a response that only the architect should be responsible for the painter. I think that accounts for the fourth-rate work all over the Country.

Mr. Finley. I think the function of the architect has been completed when he determines where the painting or the sculpture is to go. I don't think his judgment should be controlling as to the work of art itself.

Mr. Biddle. Mr. Larson wants to let the local architect select the artist.

Mr. Hudnut. The Treasury was about to give the selection of the artist to the architect. I made quite a fuss about it. I must say the outcome is not too happy.

Mr. Biddle. I think it should be remembered that almost all of the great mural painting in the world was done without reference to the architect of the building.

Mr. Belluschi. I think an argument having a great deal of weight is, whoever the artist selected would be, he would carry it through. Even if he was a very excellent painter, he might not be able physically to carry it through.

Mr. Biddle. In Larson's letter, do you mean?

Mr. Belluschi. Yes. The technique of mural paintings is rather special and the amount of work.

Mr. Hudnut. In the traditions you speak of, the painter, architect and sculptor were so much in sympathy that you could count on a resilience of view. Now the architects are split into fifteen different camps. I think the architect should certainly have a day in court.

Mr. Biddle. Would you like me to take up the memo, the one on Larson's letter?

Mr. Finley. Yes.

Mr. Biddle. This would not be a letter to him, but it would be comments upon which the Commission could base an answer to him:

EXHIBIT H

C O P Y
THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington, DC

February 15, 1951

Dear Olin:

The Commission of Fine Arts is continually called upon to advise with regard to fine arts projects in which the Federal Government is concerned, and to recommend painters and sculptors (mural painters and architectural sculptors in particular) for such projects. The subject was discussed at a recent meeting of this Commission.

In years past the Commission of Fine Arts has consulted professional organizations, such as the National Sculpture Society and others to assist in this matter. The Commission is now of the opinion, however, that certain distinguished authorities in the fine arts, such as directors and curators of museums, art schools, etc., should also be consulted, in view of their direct contact with artists. Accordingly, I have been requested by the Commission to ask if you would be kind enough to furnish us with a list of six painters and six sculptors, including their addresses, in order of preference, respectively. I would appreciate it very much if you would send us such a list, and hope you may find it possible to do so before the next meeting of the Commission, to be held on March 19th.

The over-all policy of the Commission of Fine Arts, in selecting or recommending artists for Government projects, will be, first of all, to secure the most distinguished and eminent artists in the country in an effort to create notable and monumental work; and second, to cover as wide a geographical range as possible in the selection of these artists. Also, the Commission will be on the lookout for young painters and sculptors of recognized talent, who may not have achieved national reputation.

It is believed that this procedure will serve the double purpose of keeping in touch with artists in the different geographical sections of the country and also with younger artists, as they become known through local museums, exhibitions, etc.

Such a list of painters and sculptors, as is proposed, will not be either a final or an exclusive list, as additional names will be added from time to time. In other words, the list will be for the guidance of the Commission of Fine Arts and, of course, should not be made public.

With many thanks for your assistance, I am

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.

David E. Finley,
Chairman.

Mr. Olin Dows
Rhinebeck
New York

def lw

(similar letters to: Mr. Millard Sheets
Mr. Peppino Mangravite
Mr. Henry V. Poor
Mr. Lloyd Goodrich
Mr. Daniel C. Rich
Dr. Grace L. McCann Morley
Mr. Robert Beverly Hale

EXHIBIT H-1

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington DC

Certain Comments on Administrator Larson's Letter to Dr. Finley
on the Mural Policy of the Public Buildings Service

by George Biddle

Administrator Larson makes certain criticisms of the policy of the former Section of Painting and Sculpture and outlines his own policy.

(1) "The artists were selected as the result of small scale sketches or models submitted in regional or national competitions.... Experience proved that many of the selected artists were incapable of carrying their designs through to satisfactory completion."

I am in full agreement that competitions through small scale sketches are not the most effective way of selecting outstanding mural painters and sculptors to create monumental and original works of art. Actually three methods were employed by the Section of Fine Arts.

(A) Selection of outstanding artists on a basis of actual known accomplishment in their particular field by publicized juries of artists and other qualified persons. Nearly all the important murals and sculpture were commissioned in this manner. It is the most intelligent way to select the right man for the particular job.

(B) Commissions were given to the winners of national or regional competitions through small scale models. This method gives no indication that the winner has the competence to carry out the full-scale sculpture or mural.

It is, however, the only known and democratic method of selecting young, unknown talent. Some of the very finest murals done under the section were commissioned on this basis. It is recommended that, whenever expedient, this method of selection be used for the smaller, less important commissions.

(C) Work was also given to artists who in the competitions "showed promise of artistic ability" or who had already executed satisfactory work through former government contracts.

There is an obvious advantage in encouraging young artists to enter competitions and well-known muralists and sculptors to submit their names to juries of selection.

(2) Administrator Larson states that the present policy of the buildings program is "to give serious consideration in the development of these designs to the appropriate use of murals and sculptures; to provide space and facilities for their installations, and to set up appropriate reservations to cover the cost of this work."

This is a great step forward. The absence of such provision was a serious obstacle to the effective work under the Section of Fine Arts. Administrator Larson should be congratulated.

(3) The present policy of the buildings service is that "the architect (of the building under construction) recommends artists, preferably from the vicinity of the project to execute required decorations."

This policy is the most questionable of the program. Architects have not necessarily the aptitudes or education to select outstanding and qualified muralists and sculptors for decorative work. In the course of history most of the great mural paintings and architectural sculpture have

been done without consultation with, and usually posterior to, the architectural planning of the building. Artists should be chosen in each case by a body of experts, consisting of painters, sculptors, museum directors, qualified architects and other qualified persons. The primary consideration in the choice of artists should be to obtain outstanding creative works by the best creative American artists. The selection of artists from the vicinity should be of secondary consideration. It is sad to reflect that in such countries as France, Mexico and Brazil, the outstanding creative artists of the country are employed to decorate public buildings. In the United States, with the exception of the work done under the program of the former Section of Painting and Sculpture, the techniques of selection result in an adequate and academic performance; but almost never in outstanding creative work.

(4) Administrator Larson suggests that the Commission of Fine Arts might upon consultation "furnish aesthetic advice on any project.... submitted to it both as to names of artists and as to design of murals."

This could be a splendid step in the right direction. It is hoped that the matter be further explored along these lines. Perhaps a meeting could be arranged with Administrator Larson or Commissioner Reynolds, in which the aims and policies of the Commission could be more fully presented.

EXHIBIT I

C O P Y

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Washington, DC

November 29, 1950

Honorable David E. Finley, Chairman
The Commission of Fine Arts
Interior Department Bldg.
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Finley:

I have discussed with Commissioner Reynolds, of the Public Buildings Service, your letter of October 13, 1950, suggesting a nation-wide program for the embellishment of Federal buildings with murals and sculptural decorations, and the control the Commission of Fine Arts would exercise over this program.

First, let me say that we believe murals and sculptural decorations have a definite place in certain Federal Buildings where they will supplement and enhance both the interior and exterior designs. To this end, we are currently, and expect to continue, employing a judicious use of these arts in buildings where they will serve this purpose.

The following will outline briefly the procedures followed on the previous nation-wide fine arts program referred to in your letter, some of the shortcomings of that program, our current policy, the procedure we contemplate following in future programs, and pertinent comments on the suggestions outlined in your letter.

Under the previous fine arts program it was mandatory that a certain percentage of the estimated construction cost of the buildings be reserved for mural and sculptural decorations. While this acted as a stimulant to artists, particularly during the depression years in which it was instituted, it resulted in an overabundance of these decorations in certain buildings and the placing of decorations in other purely utilitarian buildings, where they had no logical reason for being, with the resultant sacrifice of much needed facilities or equipment.

The artists were selected as the result of small scale sketches or models submitted in regional or national competitions. The majority of the artists selected were not winners of these competitions, but were those whose submitted sketches or models showed promise of artistic ability. While this would appear to be a logical means of selection, experience proved that many of the selected artists were incapable of carrying their designs through to satisfactory completion, particularly from the standpoint of appropriate subject matter. This resulted in numerous controversies between the artists, local citizens, and the Public Buildings Administration, which, in very few instances, were settled to the complete satisfaction of the Government, the artists, and the public generally.

Honorable David E. Finley

Under our present policy we require our architects, and the architects in private practice engaged to design Federal buildings for us, to give serious consideration in the development of their designs to the appropriate use of murals and sculptures; to provide space or facilities for their installation; and to set up appropriate reservations to cover the cost of their work. The architect recommends artists, preferably from the vicinity of the project, to execute the required decorations. In those instances where the work of the recommended artists is unknown to us, we request such artists to submit photographs of their work for consideration before a selection is made. By making the selection of the artists contingent upon executed work, experience has shown that many of the shortcomings of the previous program have been eliminated.

In this connection, the Public Buildings Service will welcome the Commission's furnishing the names and addresses of muralists and sculptors throughout the country, whom the Commission can recommend for consideration as projects become available. This is the current practice on all projects in the Washington-Metropolitan Area.

You suggest that the artists for all projects be selected by the Commission, but that the contracts with such artists be executed and administered by the Public Buildings Service. This would, in effect, divide responsibility for the final result. Because of the close collaboration which must exist between the designer or architect of a building and the artist who will decorate it, we are strongly of the opinion that the architect or designer should have the opportunity of suggesting, and assist in the selection of, an artist who he feels can work with him sympathetically and harmoniously. Furthermore, since the contracts with the artists must be negotiated by - and the responsibility for the execution, supervision, and administration of the contracts rests with - the Public Buildings Service, we are firmly convinced that the final selection of the artist should certainly remain with that office.

Regarding your suggestion that all designs for murals and models for sculptures for every project, regardless of location, be submitted to the Commission for aesthetic advice, we believe that this procedure would cause serious delays in obtaining approvals, making payments to the artists, completing the murals or sculptures, and in the expeditious handling of the projects generally. We would, however, have no objection to the extension of the Commission's present authority, so that it might furnish esthetic advice on any project which the Commissioner of Public Buildings, in his discretion, might wish to submit to it. If this suggestion is adopted, it would be with the understanding that the names of the artists under consideration for the more important projects, and later the designs of murals or models of sculptures for such projects, would be submitted to the Commission for comment and esthetic advice as a matter of course.

Honorable David E. Finley

While we are fully appreciative of the interest of the Commission in these matters and of their very able and sympathetic cooperation in the past, in view of the comments outlined above, we cannot advocate a nation-wide fine arts program similar to the one formerly administered by the Section of Fine Arts. Nor do we favor the selection of artists by the Commission and the mandatory submission of their work in all instances to the Commission for approval.

Sincerely yours,

JESS LARSON
ADMINISTRATOR

EXHIBIT I-1

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington, DC

February 14, 1951

Dear Sirs:

At your suggestion this Commission has considered the aesthetic aspect of the proposal to build a parking lot at [illegible] and 22nd Streets, N. W. I understand from Mr. Caemmerer that this application has been denied but that you wish some comments from us, for their possible use in other cases. You will appreciate, I am sure, that in doing this we are a little outside our usual scope. If you find we are not familiar with your present procedure, and if we suggest things you already do - or which can't be done - I beg your friendly indulgence.

1. The basic - though opposed - facts are these: First, the supply of automobile parking space must and will be increased; second, most public parking lots are so ugly that they are a blight upon aesthetic values. In residential neighborhoods parking lots are commonly considered more undesirable than a shortage of parking space.

2. However, it is of course possible, by proper use of planting, fences, walls, well-designed signs, etc., to improve the appearance of a parking lot. Insufficient use is made of this fact. We recommend that - if it is not already the practice - all applications for permits to create parking lots in residential zones be accompanied by proposed development plans. (Preferably, for the guidance of applicants, a set of requirements, or typical plans, should be prepared by one of the designing agencies.) Applications should be approved only when development plans are satisfactory, and means for enforcing them should be provided.

3. As a matter of fact, the above procedure should be applied, to an appropriate degree, in all use districts. Zoning regulations, under the general welfare clause, or by other measures which give the zoning authorities bargaining power at the time of issuing permits or making adjustments, should require such design control as will reduce to a reasonable extent the negative aesthetic effect of parking lots in all parts of the city. It is unnecessary to add that no parking lots should be permitted along the principal monumental and historic streets and avenues.

4. Numerous examples of attractively designed and planted parking lots exist in Washington. The lot to the east of Municipal Building is screened by a simple and economical but fairly effective planting. At the Octagon Building, 18th Street and New York Avenue, a low brick wall and some vines and shrubs screen the parked cars. At 18th and P Streets, N. W., there is a small institutional parking court, partly enclosed by existing trees.

Farther south on 18th, at N Street, a new commercial parking lot is well fenced but has no planting - for which there is plenty of room between the fence and the sidewalk. But the worst feature of this lot is the many cheap and unnecessarily conspicuous signs. Red and white signs may be acceptable in a store window or at a carnival show, but less garish colors can reasonably be expected in a residential neighborhood.

5. As for the particular site (at Q and 22nd) to which you called our attention, we believe it could be so treated as to be sufficiently acceptable to justify using it as a parking lot - if the Board of Zoning Adjustment found that a pressing need for parking existed in the neighborhood. However, the site is not a favorable one for economical development. It would have to be excavated to - or preferably below - the Q Street level. The exposed brick house-wall should be painted or planted with vines. The fence should be of good quality and covered with vines. The screen planting should be liberal, including evergreens and small trees; topsoil would probably have to be brought in.

All of this would probably cost more than a private operator could pay, in view of the small number of cars the area would park. A lot of this kind is more suitable for development by an institution or small apartment house. By aesthetic tests, small parking areas harmonize better with the scale of residential areas then do large ones.

6. Summary: In view of the need for additional off-street parking in every part of the city, the District officials are justified in taking every reasonable opportunity to increase the supply of such parking space. This must be done under careful control because the attractive appearance of the city is one of its most valuable assets.

The Commission of Fine Arts believes that such control is possible, that it should be applied in varying degrees to all parking lots, and that in residential areas parking lots of moderate size and appropriate design and maintenance can usually be introduced without undue loss of aesthetic values.

If we can be of any further service to you, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.

David E. Finley
Chairman.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District Building
Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT J

C O P Y

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Board of Zoning Adjustment

February 14, 1951

Dear Mr. Finley:

This will acknowledge, with appreciation, your letter of February 14, 1951, referring to the treatment of public parking lots in residential areas to render them more in harmony with the character of the neighborhood in which they may be located.

The Board of Zoning Adjustment is appreciative of the increasing need for off-street parking in the District and endeavors to carefully weigh the merits of each appeal for the establishment of a parking lot in a residential area.

We are very happy to have your comments as to how these utilitarian services may be provided with the least possible detriment to the residential character of their neighborhoods.

Sincerely yours,

Sgd.

Theodore Irving Coe
Chairman

TIC:bb

Hon. David E. Finley, Chairman
The Commission of Fine Arts
Interior Department Building
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT J-1

COPY FOR THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

The Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, The Commission of Fine Arts, and Miss Katharine N. Rhoades, or Mrs. Eugene Meyer, as provided in Paragraph 4 of the Codicil to the Will of the late Charles L. Freer, have examined the following objects:

1 Bronze vessel of the type lien, Chinese, Han dynasty

1 Lacquered wooden tray with painted decoration. From Ch'ang-sha. Chinese, Late Chou or early Han dynasty.

1 Porcelain stem cup. Chinese, Ch'eng Hua (A.D. 1465-1487),

which have been recommended for purchase for the Freer Gallery of Art by Mr. A.G. Wenley, Director, and they hereby approve the purchase.

For the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution

Jan. 25, 1951

David E. Finley

For the Commission of Fine Arts

EXHIBIT K

COPY FOR THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

The Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, The Commission of Fine Arts, and Miss Katharine N. Rhoades, or Mrs. Eugene Meyer, as provided in Paragraph 4 of the Codicil to the Will of the late Charles L. Freer, have examined the following objects:

1 Bronze ku. Chinese,
Shang dynasty.

1 Temmoku pottery bowl.
Chinese.

1 Japanese landscape painting,
15th century. Attributed
to Sesshū.

1 Japanese landscape painting,
15th century. Attributed
to Sōtan.

1 Chinese painting: prunus branch.
Yüan dynasty. Attributed
to Ch'ien Hsüan,

which have been recommended for purchase for the Freer Gallery of Art by Mr. A. G. Wenley, Director, and they hereby approve the purchase.

For the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution

Jan. 25, 1951 David E. Finley

For the Commission of Fine Arts

Nov. 21, 1950 Katharine N. Rhoades

EXHIBIT K

Jun 15, 2017